

Sample Answers

by Miss Jay

Section A: Directed Writing

Read **both** texts and answer **Question 1**.

Text A

Amira, 42 years

I've never understood why people are so keen to travel to other countries when there is so much to see in their native lands. Very few of us really know our own countries, preferring instead to hop on a fuel-guzzling aeroplane and travel thousands of miles to far-flung lands for our vacations. And what greets us when we land? Paying ridiculously high prices to enter crowded tourist attractions and then getting ripped off in restaurants by paying twice as much as locals for the same food. I believe in the staycation – taking a holiday closer to home. What better way to understand your own country's history and traditions than by holidaying there and seeing them for yourself? It's eco-friendly, and even more so if you don't use a car: why not try a combination of public transport, cycling and even walking! If you're on a low budget, stay with friends and family. It's so easy for us to get bored and fail to appreciate where we live – think about all the beautiful and interesting places you haven't seen that are within easy reach. How many of us can claim that we really know where we come from? Having a holiday with trips to historical sites and landmarks of interest will allow you to gain knowledge about your own culture. So, go on! Have a great vacation and reduce your carbon footprint at the same time.

Text B

Li Ping, 23 years

It's human nature to want to see and try new things. For young people, travelling to other countries opens their eyes to how fascinating and varied the world is. Travelling is educational: you can practise a language, learn about different cultures and attitudes, try new and exotic foods. Be brave and step outside your comfort zone! I went travelling after my A Levels, and I can honestly say it changed me as a person. I had to live on a really tight budget but had opportunities to do amazing things and see places that were breathtakingly beautiful. I also made lots of new friends along the way from different countries; we learnt so much from each other, mostly that we had far more similarities than differences! Travelling made me realise I had been too caught up with owning all the right stuff when in reality my needs were very simple. I now spend my money on experiences not things. Travelling taught me that you don't have to pay to watch a sunset, enjoy great company, or hike through a forest, and you can survive with what you can carry on your back. It made me grow up and helped me become a much nicer person, as well. I'd advise all young people to get out and see the world. It's smaller than you think!

● = Point

● = Development

Red = Evaluation

✓

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>Write a magazine article for young people about the advantages and disadvantages of travelling to other countries.</p> <p>In your article you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the ideas and opinions in both texts • give your own views, based on what you have read in the texts about the advantages and disadvantages of travelling to other countries. <p>Base your article on what you have read in both texts but be careful to use your own words.</p> <p>Address both of the bullet points.</p> <p>Begin your article with a suitable headline.</p> <p>Write about 250 to 350 words.</p> <p><u>Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 15 marks for the quality of your writing.</u></p> <p>Notes on task</p> <p>Responses <i>might</i> use the following ideas:</p> <p>Text 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘so much to see in their native lands’ – lots of people don’t get to know their own countries. • ‘fuel-guzzling aeroplane’ / ‘eco-friendly’, ‘carbon footprint’ – it’s much better for the environment to take vacations in your own country • ‘ridiculously high prices ... crowded tourist attractions ... ripped off’ – holidays in other countries are often disappointing • getting to know and understand/appreciate your own country/culture is important and rewarding • spend holidays seeing family and friends <p>Text 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is human nature to want to travel / see new things • travel is educational and offers many opportunities to learn new things • travel can be life-changing and can have positive impacts on people in terms of personality and values • meeting friends from other cultures helps us realise that the world is smaller than we think • travel can make people less focused on material possessions and appreciate the beautiful things in the world that are free 	25

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>Possible evaluation of ideas:</p> <p>Text 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether people neglect their own country and what it has to offer due to their desire to travel to other countries / people fail to appreciate what they have • whether travelling to other countries has an unacceptable impact on the environment / whether we should be considering our carbon footprint more carefully • whether the tourist industry just exploits people financially and ruins places of beauty and interest • whether people appreciate and understand their own culture properly <p>Text 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether travel is educational or just about holidays • whether we are too materialistic or whether seeing the world is just part of that materialism • how important it is to experience different cultures and meet people from different countries • whether we need to travel to understand different cultures in the age of the internet <p>Possible synthesis of ideas:</p> <p>The voice in Text 1 is older whereas Text 2 is from the perspective of a young person who travelled widely after A Levels. Both texts agree that travel has some advantages, but Text 1 argues that people should spend more time getting to know their own country rather than holidaying in other countries whereas Text 2 focuses on the advantages young people get from travelling to other countries. Text 1 also cites the impact of air travel on the environment whereas Text 2 doesn't acknowledge this at all – candidates may express their own views on this. Text 2 seems more directed at young people whereas Text 1 may focus more on older people. Text 2 seems more idealistic and just focuses on the positives.</p>	

#1 — SPECIMEN — TRAVELLING — ARTICLE

Hopping on a Plane — To Where? By Jaweria Amer

Is packing your bags for a foreign destination truly the adventure of a lifetime, or merely a hole in your wallet? This article endeavours to examine domestic versus foreign travel before arriving at a final verdict.

It is undeniable that young people have an innate desire to explore unfamiliar places, and that these journeys expose them to different cultures and traditions. Personally, the backpacking trip I took at eighteen was the most transformative experience of my life. However, do you truly need a passport to learn, when the internet offers the same exposure for free? Similarly, some people assert that travelling overseas forges friendships across borders and strips away materialism. Hence, making you a better, happier person, who is more in touch with reality. Yet such growth comes at a significant financial burden. My last trip to Bali? Vendors tried selling me ordinary trinkets for thrice the price. But is that all there is to the story?

Many argue that the desire to visit foreign locations is largely psychological — new places only seem exciting because they are unfamiliar — yet once the novelty wears off, you are left with an empty wallet and the same restless mind, which hardly makes the arduous expense worthwhile. On the flip side, domestic travel encourages people to appreciate their national heritage, something paramount for any nation to progress. Furthermore, staying closer to home eliminates the carbon emissions of fuel-guzzling aeroplanes. Most importantly, spending meaningful time with family on a local holiday creates deeper memories than any solo trip overseas. To travel locally is to invest wisely! To travel locally is to protect our planet! To travel locally is to rediscover home! So, what is our final decision?

All in all, when all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate for international travel follow an idealistic, individualistic approach while completely omitting the damage air travel inflicts on our planet. Is the answer not evident? We must choose the path that is kinder to our wallets and our world.

After all, if you hop on that plane, don't forget — you always need to land back home! Thank you for reading.

Text A

Hazeema, 14 years

I don't understand why teachers give us homework. I already have 35 hours per week of lessons and my walk to school takes 30 minutes – that's more hours and a longer commute than most adults have! Concentrating in school all day is tiring. When I come home, I want to relax, spend time on my hobbies, or do something creative, not spend hours doing more work.

Some students have quiet study areas at home, but not everyone is so lucky. For me, it's difficult to concentrate while my sisters are fighting over the TV remote control, or my dad is talking on the phone to one of his friends. I know that some students have a lot of support in doing their homework. For example, many students use the internet to find information they need, or they get help from their parents, but this isn't possible for everyone.

Also, sitting down for hours in the evening after sitting down in school all day is unhealthy. We're always being told we should be doing more physical activity, but there's no time to do it when we have so much homework!

I'm really not sure homework is as useful as some people think.

Text B

Jianyu, 16 years

I think it's really important for us to do homework. It gives us the chance to make sure we have fully understood all of the topics we've studied during our lessons in school. Students who complete their homework learn more and therefore do better on their courses. I know my teachers give homework because they find it a useful way to check what students have understood in their lessons and, perhaps more importantly, what they haven't understood.

Homework helps parents to know what their children are studying in school and means they can support them with their learning. My parents often ask questions about what homework I've got and whether I need help with it, which I really appreciate.

Having homework helps us to learn important skills, for example how to balance our time between schoolwork and extra-curricular activities like sports, music or other hobbies. This helps us to become more mature and disciplined and prepares us for adult life, which is, after all, the point of school!

I know that a lot of my classmates complain about getting homework and would rather spend time doing other things, but I really believe that it's an essential part of our learning.

Text A – against homework

- time-consuming
- homework is tiring
- it takes away from leisure / relaxation time
- not every student has a quiet place to study at home
- some students have parental support / internet access but not all
- it's unhealthy

Text B – in favour of homework

- homework allows students to check they've fully understood
- it helps students learn more / do better
- it gives teachers the chance to check what students have understood
- it helps parents know about / support their children's learning
- it helps students develop key life skills

#2 — S24 QP21 — HOMEWORK — FORMAL LETTER

Dear Principal,

With the changing times, the proposed ban on homework has become a matter of considerable debate; as per your request, the subsequent letter aims to meticulously weigh both perspectives, and the points are laid out below for your esteemed consideration.

It is undeniable that student life is arduous, with extensive hours in lessons each week, and that the burden of assignments leaves little room for rest or leisure. Research suggests that nearly sixty percent of students feel overwhelmed by after-school workload. However, a counterargument is that the problem lies not with homework itself but with the quantity — a structured limit would address exhaustion without scrapping the system. Similarly, some people assert that not every student has a quiet study space at home, and that some lack parental guidance or internet access. Thus, leaving them at an unfair advantage to their peers. Yet, this perspective falls short because we can simply introduce supervised study periods and free resources — an alternative that would allow students to complete work before leaving the building.

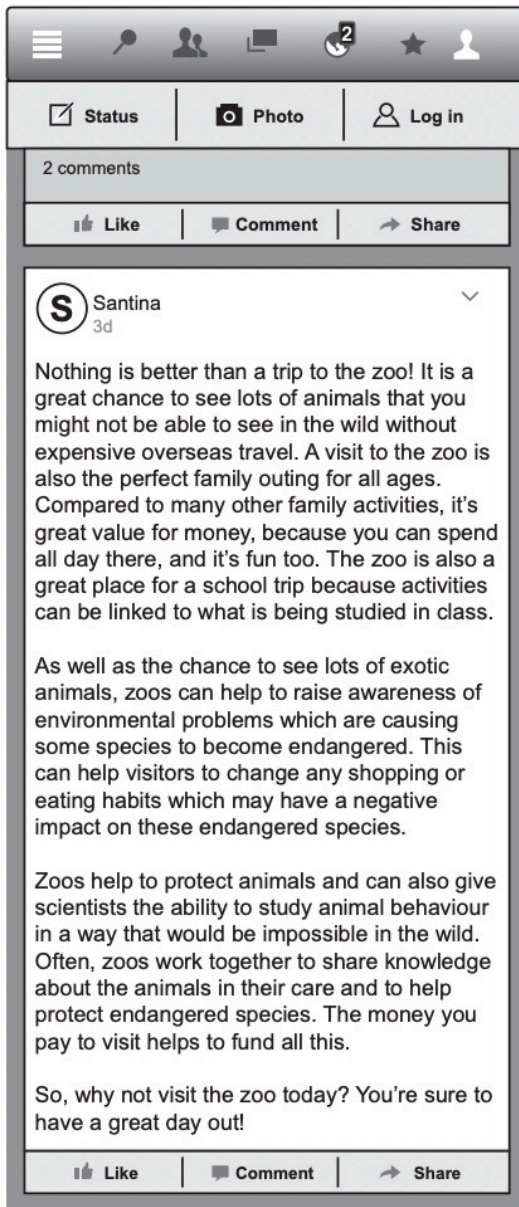
Some people claim homework reinforces what is taught during lessons, allowing students to identify gaps before they become permanent; yet it cannot be disavowed that the quantity must be flexible to allow for efficient learning. Additionally, homework does enable parents to stay involved in their children's education, strengthening the bond between home and school. Moreover, completing assignments under time pressure teaches students to balance priorities — a skill that is paramount for their futures and something I utilize myself daily.

When all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate for abolishing homework follow a short-term, individualistic approach while the long-term benefits far outweigh the temporary discomfort. Their argument, albeit popular, completely omits the role homework plays in building discipline. Taking a pragmatic view, I recommend retaining homework with structured guidelines.

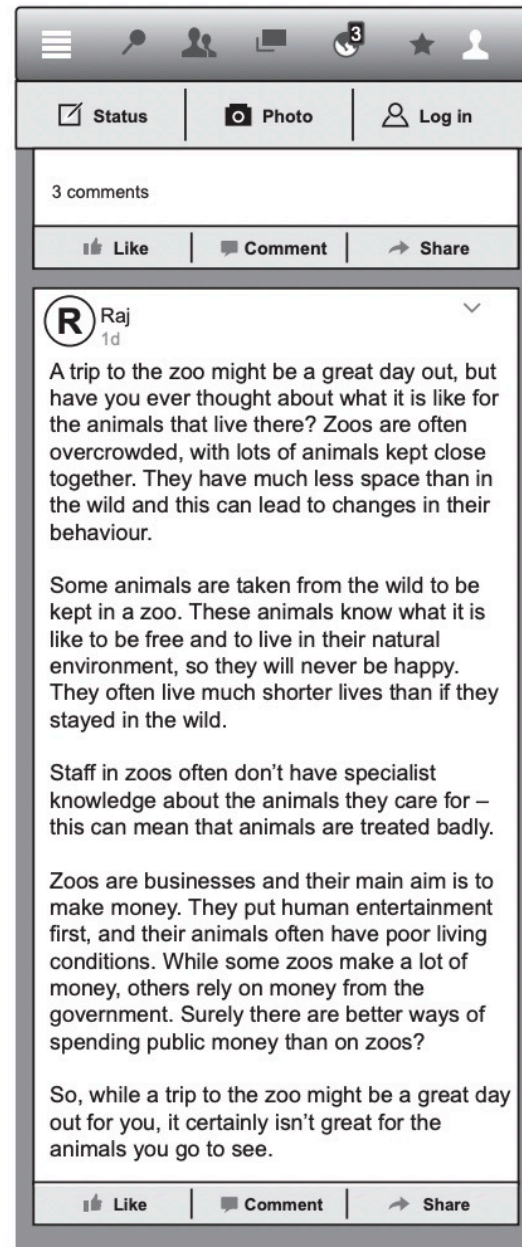
I am honoured that you took the time to consider my suggestions; ultimately — given your expertise and sound judgement — I trust you will undertake the decision that most effectively supports our collective goals, and I eagerly await your response.

Yours sincerely, Jaweria Amer

Text A
Santina, 14 years



Text B
Raj, 15 years



Text A

Viewpoint – in favour of zoos

- wide range of animals / no need for overseas travel
- perfect / fun family outing (for all ages)
- value for money / cheap / affordable
- educational / school trips
- raise awareness about endangered species
- gaining / sharing scientific knowledge

Text B

Viewpoint – against zoos

- behavioural changes in animals / overcrowding
- human entertainment prioritised over animal welfare
- public money could be better spent elsewhere
- staff don't always know how best to look after the animals
- animals' happiness / life expectancy reduced

#3 — S24 QP22 — ZOOS — SPEECH

Good morning, everyone! Have you ever wondered whether our entertainment is worth an animal's entire life? I, Jaweria Amer, stand before you to share my views on whether zoos should be banned.

My dear friends, it is undeniable that zoos offer families an affordable day out for all ages, and that they serve as educational spaces where children witness animals from their textbooks. For instance, on our last trip, both my grandfather baby cousin had a splendid time — little Amelia couldn't believe her eyes! However, a brief moment of wonder for us hardly justifies a lifetime of being caged, confined, and controlled for them. Similarly, some people assert that zoos protect endangered species and allow scientists to study animal behaviour. Thus, helping us progress and in turn help the species in the long-term. Yet, you cannot overlook that most animals feel alienated in artificial environments — meaning the very research these zoos claim to produce is fundamentally flawed.

That being said, my classmates, zoos are frequently overcrowded, with creatures kept in spaces far smaller than their natural habitats — and I know, I know, all institutes are not the same; some such as the Danzoo are making changes. But overall, owing to the lack of training of the employees, captive animals live significantly shorter lives than their wild counterparts. Adding on, many animals are taken directly from the wild — they know what freedom feels like and will never experience it again. This means that they never experience the happiness they deserve in these cages. Most importantly, zoos exist primarily to generate profit — the recent news report on BBC covered this exact topic. So, what is our final decision?

My respected listeners, when all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate for zoos follow an idealistic, individualistic approach while the arduous reality of animal suffering far outweighs any fleeting benefit. They completely omit the long-term psychological damage on captive animals. No creature deserves a cage! No creature deserves captivity! No creature deserves a life behind bars! We must ban zoos — the evidence leaves no room for doubt.

My friends, it is time to STAND UP FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES! It is our duty — I repeat — it is our duty. Thank you!

Text A

Hamza, student

I love my mobile phone and couldn't give it up. It helps me to feel safe when I'm walking to school because I know I can call my parents if I need them. They are happier to let me go out on my own because they can contact me at any time.

When I'm in school, it is easy to use my phone to do research, so I don't have to waste time going to the library or carrying around lots of heavy books. I can also set reminders on my phone for when homework is due, and I have a picture of my timetable as my screensaver, so I am always on time for class.

Photography is one of my hobbies and I like to use my phone to take photos and videos while I'm out and about. I can edit these quickly and share them with my friends. I really enjoy being able to look back on these memories.

I also think that the fact that my phone is expensive has made me more responsible. I know that my parents won't pay for a new one, so I am always careful not to lose it.

I definitely couldn't live without my phone!

Text B

Rachna, student

Although I have a mobile phone, I choose not to take it to school. I don't want to be distracted in class – checking my messages and social media accounts, instead of focusing on the lesson. This distraction isn't just a problem in class; students trip on steps and walk into doors while looking at their phones rather than watching where they are going.

Although mobile phones can be useful for schoolwork, they limit creativity when students look for ideas on the internet rather than thinking of their own. It is also difficult for teachers to know when a student has used their phone to help them do the work and this makes it hard for them to know what help students need.

Mobile phones are expensive and when students lose them, this causes a lot of stress. Having such expensive items in school encourages envy, which can lead to friendship issues.

My biggest concern is that it is easy to become addicted to your mobile phone, which has a negative impact on learning and on relationships with peers. Without mobile phones, students are free to fulfil their academic potential and to build long-lasting friendships – the two most important aspects of school life.

Your school principal is considering banning mobile phones in school and has asked students for their views. You have read the views of two students.

Write an **email** to your principal saying whether or not you think mobile phones should be banned.

Text A

Viewpoint – in favour of having mobile phones in school

- safety / can phone parents / parents happier
- make research easier / quicker / save time
- help with organisation / time keeping
- photography / capture memories / hobbies
- help develop responsibility

Text B

Viewpoint – against having mobile phones in school

- distracting / loss of focus
- limit creativity / use ideas which aren't their own
- teachers struggle to know what support a student needs
- expensive which can lead to envy / stress
- addictive

#4 — W24 QP21 — SOCIAL MEDIA — ARTICLE

Scrolling Through the Truth: Is Social Media Really the Villain? By Jaweria Amer

Is social media truly a blessing, or has it quietly become our greatest curse? This article endeavours to examine the merits and pitfalls of social media for young people before arriving at a final verdict.

It is undeniable that these apps are time-consuming, draining hours that could be spent on schoolwork, and that they weaken real-life social skills by replacing conversation with screen time. Personally, I've witnessed classmates scroll through entire lunch breaks without saying a word — it's honestly quite sad. However, a counter-argument is that social media actually builds transferable communication skills — so the problem lies with self-discipline, not the platforms. Similarly, some people assert that excessive use damages mental health, and that children can stumble upon explicit content. For instance: “The Blue Shark” game that surfaced a couple of years ago. Yet, you cannot overlook that parental controls and screen-time limits already exist — blaming the app is like blaming the fridge for your midnight snacking. But is that all there is to the story?

Many argue that social media provides a quick means of communication, allowing families separated by oceans to connect with a single tap — yet it cannot be disavowed that this connectivity has also become a lifeline for lonely teenagers, and removing it would only exacerbate their isolation rather than solve it. On the flip side, these platforms increase our understanding of how others live, fostering empathy no textbook can replicate. Furthermore, social media has become a vehicle for spreading positivity — the recent anti-racism campaign that triumphed through viral posts is proof of this. To connect is to understand, to connect is to grow, and to connect is to build a better world. So, what is our final decision?

All in all, when all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who oppose social media follow a biased, short-term approach — driven by concerned parents with a personal stake. Their argument, albeit understandable, completely omits the communal benefits. Is the answer not evident? We must embrace social media responsibly, not abandon it.

After all, if we refuse to scroll, we might just miss the message that changes everything — and that would be a truly *antisocial* decision! Thank you for reading.

Text A

Ali, student.

Personally, I think it is great that we have to wear a school uniform. It saves time in the morning, because I don't have to think about what to wear, and so I get more time to sleep!

I want to do well in school, so it's important to me to be able to focus in class. I feel as though I'm more focused when I'm wearing my uniform. If we were allowed to wear our own choice of clothes, I'd be too relaxed and wouldn't be able to concentrate so well on my lessons.

I also think that wearing uniform makes us feel that we belong to our school – like we're all part of the same 'team'. This is definitely a plus when we take on other schools in debates and sports competitions.

I'm proud of my school, and I like it when I go out into the community and people can see which school I'm from. I feel good knowing that I'm improving the school's image by being well-dressed. I know some students don't like wearing school uniform because they think it stops them from showing their personality, but for me this isn't an issue. I'm comfortable and confident in who I am, no matter what I'm wearing!

Text B

Amina, parent.

As a parent, I'm always spending money on clothes for my children and I object to having to pay for a school uniform as well. The uniform for my children's school can only be bought from the school shop and it's expensive. As it isn't possible to buy the uniform from anywhere else, I have no choice but to pay the high prices. Children grow so quickly, and constantly buying bigger uniforms leaves me with less money for other things that schools ask us to buy, such as stationery and books.

My daughter is always complaining that wearing school uniform stops her from being able to express her personality, and getting her to put her uniform on leads to arguments every morning. This is also an issue for teachers as they have to spend a lot of time and effort dealing with students who don't wear the uniform correctly. It must be so frustrating and exhausting for them!

In my opinion, students learn best when they're comfortable; wearing their own choice of clothes helps them feel more relaxed and able to concentrate better. Schools often say that wearing uniform helps students to do better in their studies, but I don't believe this is true.

Your school is considering whether to allow students to wear their own choice of clothes at school, rather than the uniform they wear now. A student and a parent have shared their opinions with you. You have decided to write an email to the principal, giving your views.

Write your **email** to the principal.

In your email, you should:

- evaluate the ideas and opinions in **both** texts
- give your views about whether students should be allowed to wear their own choice of clothes at school, based on what you have read in the texts.

Base your email on what you have read in **both** texts but be careful to use your own words.

Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your email with 'Dear Principal' and supply a suitable ending.

Write about **250** to **350** words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 15 marks for the quality of your writing. [25]

#5 — W24 QP22 — MOBILE PHONES — FORMAL EMAIL

Subject: Regarding the proposed ban on mobile phones

Dear Sir/Madam,

With the changing times, the debate surrounding mobile phones in school has become a matter of considerable debate; the subsequent email aims to meticulously weigh both perspectives, and the points are laid out below for your esteemed consideration.

It is undeniable that mobile phones allow students to contact their parents instantly, providing safety, and that they serve as research tools that save arduous hours of manual searching. Studies show that around seventy percent of students use phones for schoolwork daily. However, we all know that mobile phones are rarely used for such emergencies are instead just used for social media — and the distraction they cause exacerbates the very problems they claim to solve. Similarly, some people assert that smartphones help with organisation and that maintaining an expensive device teaches responsibility. I, personally, have seen students care for their phones as if they were their children. Yet, you cannot overlook that these gadgets create visible wealth gaps, breeding envy among students who cannot afford the latest model.

On the contrary, some people claim banning phones would greatly reduce distractions, allowing students to give their teachers undivided attention; come to think of it, you can waste time whilst just fidgeting a pen as well, it is truly up to the student. Some advantages of a mobile phone that cannot be disavowed are that teachers can accurately gauge each student's progress — a benefit that is paramount for providing tailored academic support. Furthermore, students would generate their own ideas rather than copying from the internet, fostering genuine creativity. Moreover, removing the addictive pull of notifications would encourage face-to-face conversation, building real social skills no screen can replicate.

When all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate for keeping phones follow an individualistic, biased approach — backed by students personally attached to their devices. Their argument, albeit popular, completely omits the link between phone use and declining performance. Taking a pragmatic view, I recommend banning phones during school hours.

I am honoured that you took the time to consider my suggestions; ultimately — given your expertise and sound judgement — I trust you will undertake the decision that most effectively supports our collective goals, and I eagerly await your response.

Regards,
Jaweria Amer

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>Notes on task:</p> <p>Responses should be based on some or all of the following <u>ideas</u>:</p> <p>Text A Viewpoint – against going to university</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not the only path to success / other ways to reach your goals • make <u>more</u> money / earn <u>more</u> / get paid <u>more</u> (than friends / peers) • do not have to wait to start earning / can earn straight away • university is expensive / cost / debt • experience and hard work are (more) important <p>Text B Viewpoint – in favour of going to university</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can learn about self / find out who you are • can help decide on future career / job (that you'll enjoy) • can earn <u>more</u> money / earn <u>more</u> / get paid <u>more</u> • develop essential / useful skills / gain problem solving / critical thinking / communication skills • chance to meet new / different people / make friends <p>Credit <u>any</u> wording in candidate response which captures the <u>idea</u>; it does not need to be expressed in the wording of the texts or of the MS.</p> <p>Evaluation is offering judgement of an idea. Anything which suggests prioritisation of one idea over another, or dismissal of an idea, is valid as evaluation.</p> <p>Also look out for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of rhetorical questions which may be evaluative • tone which implies evaluation • emotive vocabulary which implies evaluation <p>Development is adding an example or information additional to an idea already in the text, e.g. a viable alternative, personal experience, etc. whereas evaluation is about offering a judgement of the quality or validity of that idea. It is also possible that we will see development of evaluation.</p> <p>Candidates may also decide to evaluate the actual texts – as well as, or instead of, the ideas and opinions within them – by considering the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how sensible / convincing the argument is • evidence of bias in the texts • how well supported the argument is (with evidence) • consideration of others' viewpoints • use of language 	

#6 — S25 QP21 — SCHOOL UNIFORM — FORMAL EMAIL

To: The Principal **From:** Jaweria Amer **Subject:** Regarding the school uniform policy

Dear Sir/Madam,

With the changing times, the question of whether students should wear their own clothes has become a matter of considerable debate; as per your request, the subsequent email aims to meticulously weigh both perspectives, and the points are laid out below for your esteemed consideration.

It is undeniable that school uniform is expensive — particularly when purchased from one shop — and that this financial strain leads to arduous quarrels between children and their parents. Research indicates that families spend fifteen percent more on mandatory uniform than regular clothing. However, a counterargument is that thrifting and hand-me-downs exist, so why not go for that option? Similarly, some people assert that uniform suppresses individuality, and that students learn better in their own clothes. This might make them more comfortable, aiding learning. Yet, true individuality is expressed through character — never fabric — and if casual clothes genuinely improved focus, every workplace in the world would have abolished dress codes by now.

On the contrary, having a uniform saves considerable time each morning, allowing students to focus on what truly matters. Even though from what I have witnessed, students find a way to spend thirty minutes there as well. Moreover, wearing the same uniform cultivates a powerful sense of belonging and school pride. It creates a healthier environment — one where academic performance takes priority over appearances. Most importantly, a smart uniform projects a professional image that benefits the school's reputation. It also eliminates the visible wealth gap, ensuring nobody is bullied based on what they wear; and it cannot be disavowed that this equality fosters.

When all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate against uniform follow a biased, individualistic approach — driven by financial grievance rather than objectivity. Their argument, albeit emotionally compelling, completely omits the long-term benefits of equality. Taking a pragmatic view, I recommend retaining the uniform policy.

I am honoured that you took the time to consider my suggestions; ultimately — given your expertise and sound judgement — I trust you will undertake the decision that most effectively supports our collective goals, and I eagerly await your response.

Regards,
Jaweria Amer

Text A
Pierre, 20 years

2 comments

Like Comment Share

P Pierre
2d

After finishing school, my friends and I decided that we wanted to spend the long summer break travelling to as many different places as possible before starting university. It was the best time of my life! I had been in education for over 10 years and I needed some time out to relax and do something entirely different.

We travelled and explored parts of my country I hadn't visited before. I loved experiencing the cultures of these different regions, trying new foods and joining in with local customs. Not only this, but my friends and I had so much fun and made memories that will last a lifetime.

Travelling with my friends definitely helped me to be more independent because my parents weren't there to help me solve problems and overcome challenges. I also learnt life skills like managing my money, and this was certainly useful when we returned from our travels and went to university.

I know some people would say that travelling during the long summer break is a waste of time, but I would argue that it helps you to gain experiences and develop life skills that can't be taught in a classroom, so my advice would be 'Go for it!'

Like Comment Share

Text B
Maryam, 16 years

3 comments

Like Comment Share

M Maryam
1d

I really don't understand why anyone would want to go travelling during the long summer break. It seems a ridiculous idea to me when there are far more useful ways to spend the summer.

Firstly, everything when you travel, like transport, accommodation and activities, is expensive, and the money could be used instead to help with the cost of further study. I know from my older sister that being at university costs a lot, so wasting all that money just on travel doesn't seem like a good idea to me. Surely it's better to stay at home and get some work experience, whether that's a summer job, voluntary work or helping in a family business.

Work experience can teach you life skills that will help you in the future, for example how to communicate with different kinds of people and how to manage your time. You could even earn some money or perhaps make some useful contacts with people who could help you in your future career.

If you want to travel, do it when you're older and can afford it – you'll enjoy it more and get more out of it. The long summer break at the end of your time at school is a golden opportunity to prepare for your future. Plan it properly and make the most of it – or you may regret it!

Like Comment Share

Your cousin is about to finish school and is considering whether to go travelling during the long summer break before going to university. After reading two blog posts, you decide to write an email to your cousin giving your views on what your cousin should do during the long summer break.

Write your **email** to your cousin.

Notes on task:

Responses should be based on some or all of the following ideas:

Text A

Viewpoint – in favour of travelling during the long summer break

- time to relax / do something different
- chance to explore different cultures
- have fun / make memories
- become independent
- learn life skills

Text B

Viewpoint – in favour of work experience / against travelling during the long summer break

- travelling is expensive / a waste of money
- learn life / work skills
- earn money
- make useful contacts
- better to travel when older

#7 — S25 QP22 — SUMMER BREAK — INFORMAL EMAIL

Subject: About your summer break plans!

Dear Cousin,

Hey! Just read your mail about this summer — and honestly, are you really considering filing papers over the adventure of a lifetime?

Some claim that staying home and working is smarter because you earn your own money and gain independence. Not only do you get to see breathtaking sights, but you also make poignant memories with your friends. However, everything comes at a price. They also argue that summer jobs teach life skills and that making contacts helps your career. While that is important in its own regard, it is incontrovertible that contacts can be made while travelling too. Plus, the argument that it's better to travel when older ignores that adult life comes with mortgages and zero free time — so when exactly is "older"?

Contrary to what some people may believe, although you do have your whole life ahead of you, you will never be seventeen again, so make the most of it. Travelling doesn't have to drain your wallet — backpacking on a budget teaches resourcefulness no office job ever could. And here's the thing: it doesn't just save money, it genuinely changes you — my trip to Northern Pakistan last summer completely shifted how I see the world, and I'd never have grown that much sitting behind a desk. On the bright side, exploring new places opens your eyes to cultures and traditions you'd never encounter at home. Most importantly, the memories and friendships you create on those trips? Priceless — they stay with you forever.

All in all, the stay-at-home argument focuses on short-term gains, takes a purely individualistic view, and comes from people who've forgotten what it feels like to be young and free. You should absolutely travel — pack your bags and go!

Kudos for reading my ramble — hope it helped! Gotta dash, Mum's calling. Take care!

Love,
Jaweria

Read **both** texts and answer **Question 1**.

Our school has some money to spend!
Shall we spend it on the sports hall or the library?
Please share your views here.

Text A
 Kwame, student captain of the basketball team

I think that the money should be spent on improving the sports hall. A sports hall should provide a safe and comfortable place for students to take part in physical activities. But our current sports hall doesn't have air conditioning and the roof leaks, putting students at risk of illness and injury.

Lots of studies have shown that regular exercise is excellent for students' mental health and their ability to study, so having a better sports hall to exercise in would be good for all our students, not just the sporty ones!

At the moment, the sports hall is quite small. If we use the money to make it bigger, we'll be able to host lots of exciting sports competitions and events. This would mean our school would be better known by other schools, which would improve our reputation.

Finally, if we had a better sports hall, it could be used by local people as well, giving them a place to stay active by doing things like badminton and yoga. This would help improve the school's relationship with the whole community.

So we should definitely use the money to improve the sports hall because it would have lots of benefits for everyone.

Text B
 Miss Akello, teacher

School libraries are important places for students and teachers. They give access to all kinds of materials and provide lots of information in the form of books, magazines, videos, and more. While our current library has these materials, a lot of them are old and using the money to update them would mean everyone could have access to the latest information.

Also, school libraries help students develop research skills. Spending some of the money on updating the IT facilities in the library would help students improve these skills. We could put in a digital catalogue and more computers connected to the internet. Doing this would also give students the chance to find new interests and to enjoy learning things beyond what they're taught in class.

If we used the money to improve the library, we could put on events such as book clubs and author visits which our students would love. We could also invite local people to come to these which would improve links with the community. I know several local writers who'd be willing to give a talk!

In all these ways, improving the school library would make learning better for everyone. This is why I believe it would be the best use of the school's money.

Question 1

Your school has recently received some money to spend on improving either the sports hall or the library. You have read some of the opinions posted on the school noticeboard. Your principal has asked you to write a report, giving your views.

Write a **report** for your school principal.

In your report you should:

- evaluate the ideas and opinions in **both** texts
- give your own views about whether the money should be spent on improving the sports hall or the library, based on what you have read in the texts.

Base your report on what you have read in **both** texts but be careful to use your own words.

Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your report with 'To: The Principal'. Remember to give your name and a date.

Write about **250 to 350** words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 15 marks for the quality of your writing.

[25]

1	<p>Your school has recently received some money to spend on improving either the sports hall or the library. You have read some of the opinions posted on the school noticeboard. Your principal has asked you to write a report, giving your views.</p> <p>Write a report for your school principal.</p> <p>In your report you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the ideas and opinions in both texts • give your own views about whether the money should be spent on improving the sports hall or the library, based on what you have read in the texts. <p>Base your report on what you have read in both texts but be careful to use your own words.</p> <p>Address both of the bullet points.</p> <p>Begin your report with 'To: The Principal'. Remember to give your name and a date.</p> <p>Write about 250 to 350 words.</p> <p>Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 15 marks for the quality of your writing.</p> <p><u>Notes on task:</u></p> <p>Responses should be based on some or all of the following ideas:</p> <p>Text A—in favour of sports hall development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide safe and comfortable place / current sports hall is dangerous • good for students' mental health / ability to study • host sports competitions and events • improve the school's reputation / better image for school • improve school's relationship with (whole) community <p>Text B—in favour of library development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to up-to-date materials/information • help students develop research skills • provide chance to find new interests / learn things beyond those taught in the classroom • put on events // e.g. book clubs and author visits • improve links with the local community <p>Credit <u>any</u> wording in candidate response which captures the <u>idea</u>; it does not need to be expressed in the wording of the texts or of the MS.</p>	25
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#8 — W25 QP21 — SPORTS HALL VS LIBRARY — REPORT

To: The Principal Date: 15th November 2025

Heading: A report on the school funding allocation: findings and recommendations

Introduction

As per the Principal's instruction, this report aims to examine whether the school's funds should be spent on improving the sports hall or the library; drawing upon student perspectives and prevailing trends, the subsequent findings evaluate both approaches to determine the most beneficial course of action.

Perceived Benefits of Improving the Library

Upgrading the library will provide every student with up-to-date resources in tandem with equipping them with necessary expertise on relevant topics. This will aid them in the long-term with their grades and careers. Yet it cannot be disavowed all this information is already available for free on the internet. Furthermore, some people assert that a library will allow students to broaden their horizons by hosting unique academic events. For instance, the Karachi Literature Festival at the Jay Academy had two thousand participants who were exposed to new branches of learning. However, we must consider that the younger generation is considerably more interested in recreational events like sports.

Merits of Improving the Sports Hall

It is undeniable that not only will improving the sports hall give students a safe venue, but it is also good for students' mental health. Studies consistently show that regular physical activity enhances both general wellbeing and academic performance significantly. Although we cannot refute that most students only end up being distracted by such extracurriculars. On the contrary, the most valid claim is that a larger hall would boost the school's image in the entire region. This would allow the pupils to explore opportunities in the sporting field, for instance: representing the school on different platforms. A student from the senior batch reports, "I am now aiming to apply to MIT in the hopes of the sports scholarship."

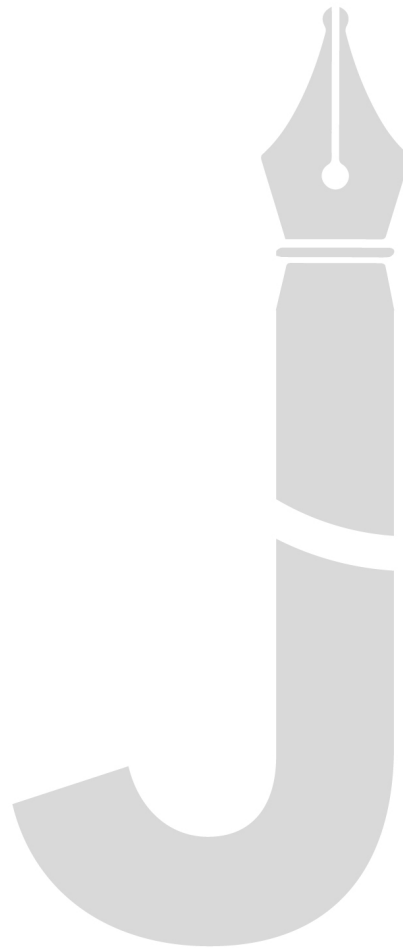
Final Evaluation:

When all these aforementioned points coalesce that people who advocate for the sports hall are pupils in the school themselves, so they understand the situation better. They also follow a more communal approach — backed by statistics, hence, siding with them, I recommend allocating the funds to the sports hall.

Conclusion:

This report has achieved its aim to inform, influence and illuminate. I express my gratitude you and entrust you — as more well versed on the matter — act on these findings judiciously.

Reported by: Jaweria Amer



Text A

Arham, businessman

While going to university can be useful, it is not the only path to success. Some of the most famous business people have made it without a university degree. When I left school, I didn't go to university; instead, I started working full-time in a clothing shop. I worked my way up to the role of manager and then, with all I had learnt, I opened my first shop. Now I own one of the biggest chains of clothing shops in the country. Even now, I make more money than a lot of my friends who went to university and, what's more, I didn't have to spend three years studying before I could start earning. In fact, I first got paid just a week after leaving school!

For many students, university is simply too expensive; the cost of tuition, coursebooks, and living expenses can really add up. Young people can save a lot of money and avoid getting into debt by choosing to go straight into work.

In many cases, experience and hard work are more important for success than academic qualifications. This was certainly true for me, and I'd encourage all young people who are about to leave school to think carefully about whether university is the right choice for them or whether they could take a different path to success.

Text B

Maryam, third-year university student

I have personally gained so much from being at university. Firstly, university has given me the chance to learn more about myself and find out who I really am. Through my university course and extra-curricular activities, I've been able to discover my passions, which has helped me to decide on the career I'd like to have in the future. Having a university degree will also mean that I'll be able to earn more money while also doing a job that I know I'll enjoy.

Being at university has given me all the essential skills and knowledge that I'll need in the future. My classes have given me the chance to learn and practise things like problem-solving, critical thinking and communication, which will help me to get the job I want.

There are students at my university from all over the country, so being here has given me the chance to meet people I would never have met otherwise. I've made friends with lots of people who think like me, and I'm sure we'll be friends for life.

I have loved my time so far at university, and to any school student thinking about whether or not to go to university, I would say 'Go for it!' as you definitely won't regret it.

Your class is in the final year at school, and your English teacher has organised a debate on the statement 'All school leavers should go to university.' A businessman and a university student have given their opinions to the class.

Write a **speech** giving your views on the statement 'All school leavers should go to university.'

Text A

Viewpoint – against going to university

- not the only path to success / other ways to reach your goals
- make more money / earn more / get paid more (than friends / peers)
- do not have to wait to start earning / can earn straight away
- university is expensive / cost / debt
- experience and hard work are (more) important

Text B

Viewpoint – in favour of going to university

- can learn about self / find out who you are
- can help decide on future career / job (that you'll enjoy)
- can earn more money / earn more / get paid more
- develop essential / useful skills / gain problem solving / critical thinking / communication skills
- chance to meet new / different people / make friends

#9 — W25 QP22 — UNIVERSITY VS WORKING — SPEECH

Good morning, everyone! Have you ever stopped to wonder whether you truly need a piece of paper to validate your potential? I, Jaweria Amer, stand before you to share my views on whether all school leavers should go to university.

My dear friends, it is undeniable that higher education **succours you in self-discovery**, in tandem with **charting a course towards forming meaningful bonds**. Personally, I used to **be an introverted kid; however, befriending people with similar mindsets in college helped me get out of my comfort zone**. **Yet this is arduous for individuals with social anxiety, so it only applies to some**. Similarly, some people assert that university **broadens your horizons** alongside **teaching practical life skills**, and that it allows you to **pursue complex professions like medicine**. Yet, **you cannot overlook that countless careers require internships and hands-on training even after your degree** — so a certificate alone guarantees nothing. Yet is that all there is to the story?

My classmates, many argue that stepping directly into the workforce **allows you to build your finances from day one** — and it cannot be disavowed that early earners **accumulate significantly less debt**, **which is precisely why they end up with a considerable financial head start**, **but that is only true if you are smart with it**. That being said, it is undeniable that you **avoid the unbearable strain tuition fees** place upon your family — the result being that **young earners can support their kith and kin far sooner**. **Take Mark Zuckerberg, who left Harvard and built one of the most powerful companies in history — proof that raw ambition can outweigh any diploma**. Most importantly, entering the workforce means **you learn the market's demands first-hand**. **To work is to grow! To work is to learn! To work is to truly live!** So, what is our final decision?

My respected listeners, when all these aforementioned points coalesce, people who advocate for university follow an idealistic, individualistic approach — usually given by students who haven't even entered the job market yet. Their argument, albeit emotionally compelling, completely omits the financial burden of debt. As the common phrase goes, "experience is the best teacher." We must recognise that success is built through action, not certificates.

My friends, it is time to FORGE YOUR OWN PATH! Not all roads lead through a university campus — I repeat — not all roads lead through a university campus. Thank you!